

long term care
connection

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Stay well this winter

You can't catch a cold or the flu by standing in the rain. And you can't cure either one with chicken soup.

But there are ways to stay well this winter that are nearly that simple. And since it can take weeks to get better from a cold or the flu, your best bet is to stop them before they start.

Steer clear of germs

People in the U.S. get 1 billion colds a year. There are fewer cases of the flu, but it can be much more serious. The flu can be especially hard on older people or those with a disease, such as diabetes or heart disease.

Colds and the flu are caused by viruses. They are spread by touch or by a sneeze or cough. You can help keep yourself and others well with these tips:

- Wash your hands often, especially if you've been around someone who is sick. Use a disinfectant to clean surfaces, such as phones or toys, touched by sick people.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then throw the tissue away.
- Avoid touching your nose,

mouth or eyes.

- Get a flu shot.

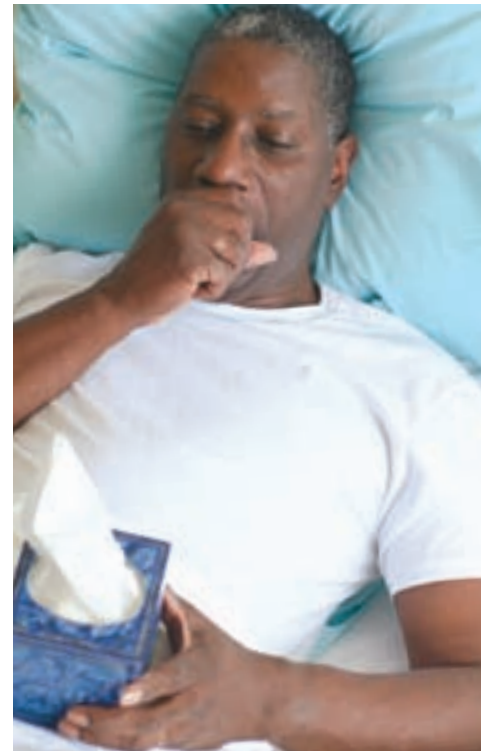
If you do get sick

You might have the flu if your symptoms come on quickly and include a fever higher than 101 degrees, chills and muscle aches.

If you think you have the flu, call your doctor. There are medicines that can help. You should also see your doctor if you have chest pain or trouble breathing.

Rest is one of the best things you can do if you get the flu or have a bad cold. These tips may also help:

- Relieve symptoms with over-the-counter medicines. They can help with aches, fever, stuffiness and swollen sinuses. Make sure to read labels to find out what each drug is for. Ask your doctor if you have questions.
- Drink lots of fluids and eat well.



- Don't drink alcohol or smoke.

It's important to stay home when you're sick. You'll feel better, and you'll avoid spreading germs to others.

Sources: American Lung Association; National Institutes of Health

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Learn more about COPD

You need to breathe to live. And when it gets hard to breathe, life can get harder.

People who have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) have a hard time breathing. If you have COPD, it means your lungs are damaged—usually due to smoking.

Although there is no cure for COPD, there are things you and your doctor can do to help you breathe—and live—more easily.

What is COPD?

COPD is a term for two lung diseases that often occur together.

Emphysema damages the air sacs in your lungs. As a result, your



blood gets too little oxygen and too much carbon dioxide.

Chronic bronchitis harms your airways and creates mucus. That makes it hard for you to breathe.

You may have COPD if you:

- Have a chronic cough.
- Are short of breath.

Talk to your doctor if you have any of these symptoms, especially if

you smoke or have smoked.

Treating COPD

The best way to treat COPD is to stop smoking.

Your doctor can also give you medicines that make it easier for you to breathe. You might need to carry oxygen with you at times to help your breathing.

It's also important for people with COPD to avoid getting sick. So talk to your doctor about getting a pneumonia vaccination, and be sure to get a flu shot every year.

Make life easier

The following tips can help you live better with COPD:

- Join a COPD support group.
- Avoid smoke, fumes or air pollution.
- Learn how to cough to clear your airways.

Ask your doctor about exercises for people with COPD.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

When does COPD become an emergency?

People with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) often have a cough.

Their chests often feel tight. And they often have mucus in their airways.

Those are common symptoms of COPD. But if these symptoms suddenly get worse, it's time to get help.

If you have COPD, you also should contact your

doctor right away if:

- You have a fever.
- You have trouble walking or talking.
- Your heart is beating very fast or irregularly.
- Your lips or fingernails are gray or blue.
- Your medicines don't help you breathe better.

Source: National Institutes of Health